

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-8, and 11-15 remain for reconsideration. Claims 2 and 9-10 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 16-20 have been newly added.

All claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,049,602 to Foladare in view of U.S. Patent 5,884,032 to Batemen. The rejections are respectfully traversed based on the following discussion.

Briefly, the present invention is directed to providing customer service support and, more particularly, to a call back system wherein the customer does not have to wait on hold to speak to an agent (e.g., customer service representative). When a customer calls for service or requests service via a web page, the customer provides a call back phone number as well as specifies a particular problem. The call back numbers and corresponding problems are stored for example in a telephony server. The server calls an agent. When the agent answers, the agent enters his/her ID such that the server recognizes them as available. The server can then match the available agent having expertise with a particular problem and then bridge the call back to the customer using the call back number. In this manner, the agent with the appropriate skill set to

solve the customer's particular problem may be selected to deal with the customer. The customer may also request a co-browsing session for example so that both the customer and the agent may browse the same information as they speak (e.g., the customer may push a web page to the agent showing a disputed bill). The above is disclosed for example on page 7, lines 15-20 of the application.

As understood, the Examiner has relied on Foladare for teaching a system wherein an agent at an agent station enters his ID using DTMF tones which are detected by a telephony server to recognize the agent. However, since Foladare does not appear to teach or suggest a system wherein the user can request a call-back by an agent at a later time the Examiner has additionally relied on Bateman.

Bateman appears to teach a customer service system which provides a call-back capability. However, neither Foladare nor Bateman teach or suggest selecting an agent with the appropriate skill set matched the a customer's particular problem. This is set forth, for example, on page 7, lines 15-20 of the application. On column 6, line 48-51, Bateman does appear to disclose that an agent may be alerted to the customer's problem prior to speaking to the customer so that the agent may be better prepared to answer the question. However, this is not analogous to actually selecting the agent with the appropriate skill set for the problem. For example, according to the present invention if the customer has a billing problem, then they should be matched

with an agent that has billing expertise.

To the contrary, with Bateman, the best that may be accomplished is pre-alerting the agent that the customer has a billing problem, but the agent selected to call back the customer still may not be suited to handle billing problems. This may lead to customer frustration and inefficiency since the customer will likely have to be transferred to a more suited agent.

All claims as amended include the feature of selecting an agent based on a customer's particular problem.

Claim 1 recites "...requesting a call-back and identifying a problem, the agent ID entered yielding dual tone multi frequency (DTMF) tones encoding the agent ID corresponding to the agent;... and selecting an agent based on the problem" (emphasis added).

Independent claim 6 recites "said telephony server comprising a storage for storing phone numbers to be called back and corresponding problem... ringing a phone for said at least one agent having expertise for said corresponding problem" (emphasis added).

Independent claim 11 recites "...the routed call requesting a call-back and specifying a problem, the DTMF tones encoding the agent ID corresponding to the agent with expertise for the problem..." (emphasis added).

Finally, independent claim 16 recites "storing phone numbers and corresponding problems for each of the customers... matching the available

agent to a stored problem; and bridging a call-back from the available agent to the customer using the stored phone number corresponding to the problem”
(emphasis added).

The above features recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by the prior art of record. As such, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 1, 3-8, and 11-20 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue. Please charge any shortages and credit any overcharges to our Deposit Account number 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

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